

## **Proficient Readers and Writers . . .**

### **create sensory images**

#### **Readers . . .**

- create images from text during and after reading
- use developing images to support their ongoing comprehension of their reading

#### **Writers . . .**

- select words that will create strong images for their readers
- match their illustrations and text format (spacing, handwriting, paragraphing) with the visual impression they have in mind for their writing

## Mathematicians . . .

- use mental pictures/models of shapes, numbers, and processes to build understanding of concepts and problems and to experiment with ideas
- use concrete models/manipulatives to build understanding and visualize problems
- visually represent thinking through drawings, pictures, graphs, and charts
- picture story problems like a movie in the mind to help understand the problem
- visualize concepts in their head (i.e. parallel lines, fractions, etc.)

## Researchers . . .

- create rich mental pictures to better understand text
- interweave written images with multisensory (auditory, visual, kinesthetic) components to enhance comprehension
- use words, visual images, sounds and other sensory experiences to communicate understanding of topic (that can lead to further questions for research)

## TALKING DRAWINGS

**Purpose:** To activate schema  
To provide information that shapes future teaching  
To provide a vehicle for students to measure learning

**Process:** Invite students to draw (sketch) a picture that shows everything they know about the subject they are going to explore. Ask them to let their drawings carry their entire background knowledge. Provide a short time for sketching.

Once everyone has their schema represented in their drawing, have the students turn to a neighbor and tell the neighbor about their drawings and all about the topic. The students can look for differences and similarities between their drawings. The students can also be encouraged to discuss how they know what they know (i.e. they have read about the topic, they have seen a movie, etc.). The students can add one and two word labels to their drawings which capture major concepts from their background knowledge.

Collect the drawings and use the information they contain to develop the unit of study, etc. These initial drawings can also be used as a basis of comparison after the unit of study is completed (i.e. have the student draw a post talking drawing and compare it to the pre drawing).

**Source:** *Talking drawings: A Strategy for Assisting Learners* by Suzanne McConnell, Journal of Reading, December 1992/January 1993

## USING VISUALS TO ENHANCE COMPREHENSION

- WHY** Proficient readers create mental pictures as they read as a way of enhancing and monitoring their developing textual understandings. However, when reading content area materials, some readers struggle to apply their visualization skills to expository text structure and information. By utilizing graphic organizers, readers are more likely to see the concepts of an expository text in a way that supports meaning making.
- WHAT** Any expository text  
Carefully selected blank graphic organizers
- HOW** After selecting, the expository text readers will be asked to read, carefully select an appropriate graphic organizer. The organizer might match either the text structure present in the expository text or match the desired learning outcomes set for the passage.
- Introduce the graphic organizer to the readers and demonstrate how it matches either the text structure of the piece they will be reading or the desired informational walk ways from the text.
- Begin reading the expository text aloud and, using the overhead, demonstrate how you would begin filling in the graphic organizer.
- Once the readers understand the process, invite them to continue reading, completing the graphic organizer as they read.
- After all the readers have had the opportunity to complete their graphic organizer, come together and share products. Compare the content of various readers organizers and discuss the ways in which the organizer helped to frame the readers thinking while they read the expository text. Link the ways readers create pictures in their heads of the setting, characters, etc. when they read narrative text with the way graphic organizers give visual structures to information when reading expository text.
- HOW ELSE** Once readers are confident in completing graphic organizers, they can be invited to either select their own, based on what they perceive the text structure and/or learning outcome might be, or design their own graphic organizer which best supports their visual representations of a content piece.

adapted by L. Conrad

## Guide to Selecting Appropriate Graphic Techniques

Desired Learning Outcome	Desired Level of Comprehension	Thinking Process Involved	Graphic Techniques
Recall/remembering facts (getting information directly from the text)	Literal: Reading the lines	Analysis, organization, categorization	Semantic Maps Flow Charts Labeling Tracing Text Cues Adjunct Questions Drawings
Interpretation/inference (perceiving relationships)	Interpretive: Reading between the lines	Elaboration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creating images</li> <li>• creating examples</li> <li>• paraphrasing</li> </ul>	Drawings Charts/Graphs Maps Icons
Application/use/transfer (expressing opinions; forming new ideas)	Applied: Reading beyond the lines	Integration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• interrelating ideas</li> <li>• creating analogies</li> <li>• creating metaphors</li> <li>• problem solving</li> </ul>	Drawings Test Questions with Visuals Pseudographs

from G. Rakes, T. Rakes, L. Smith

## Sample Types of Graphic Organizers for Common Text Structures

Cause/Effect		Compare/Contrast
Cause		
_____		
_____		
_____		
↓		
Effect		
_____		
_____		
_____		
		similarities
		_____
		_____
		_____
		differences
		_____ ↔ _____
		_____ ↔ _____
		_____ ↔ _____
Problem/Solution		
Problem	Solution	
_____ → _____	_____	
_____	_____	
_____	_____	
		Time/Order
		_____
		1 _____
		2 _____
		3 _____
		4 _____

adapted from J. Dole

## STRETCH TO SKETCH

### WHY

Language users relate the texts they encounter to their backgrounds of experience. Moving to another communication system, such as art, can lead the learner to generate new insights and meanings. They may discover something new about their feelings about the text, its overall structure, the interrelationships among characters or ideas, etc. And, since language users are engaged in a semantic transaction when they read, it is likely that the sketches generated will vary across readers, often representing the visual image constructed while reading. This variation is likely to be greater when texts are open to a number of different interpretations, a phenomenon perhaps more common in narrative than expository materials.

### WHO

This strategy is for the language user who is focusing on isolated words, sentences, paragraphs, or pages instead of the overall meaning and structure of the text.

### MATERIALS

Almost any expository or narrative text.

### HOW

Have readers read the chosen text.

After all readers have had a chance to read the text, put it away.

Tell the readers that they are to sketch what the text is about, what the text means to them, the picture they had in their head while reading, or a major concept they learned from the text.

Ask each reader to write a short explanation of his/her sketch. Their explanation might include insights into the author's language that sparked certain images, parts of the text that were most clear, etc.

In small groups, have readers share sketches and explanations. At the end of the sharing have the group decide on one sketch to share with the whole class.

Share and discuss selected sketches with the whole class.

### EXTENSIONS

Put all the sketches in a booklet or on display so that students can examine all of them for new insights.

If a text has few, none, or very poor illustrations, it may not be necessary to tell the readers to put away their texts before sketching. In fact leaving the text open in such cases encourages readers to reread as they devise their sketches.

With content materials, give readers copies of a passage minus the pictures, drawings, graphs. Then ask them to sketch. Once again, having the text available will encourage careful rereading. Readers can then compare their sketches with one another and the author. A discussion of the need to read charts and diagrams and how they fit with the running text in a particular book may follow.

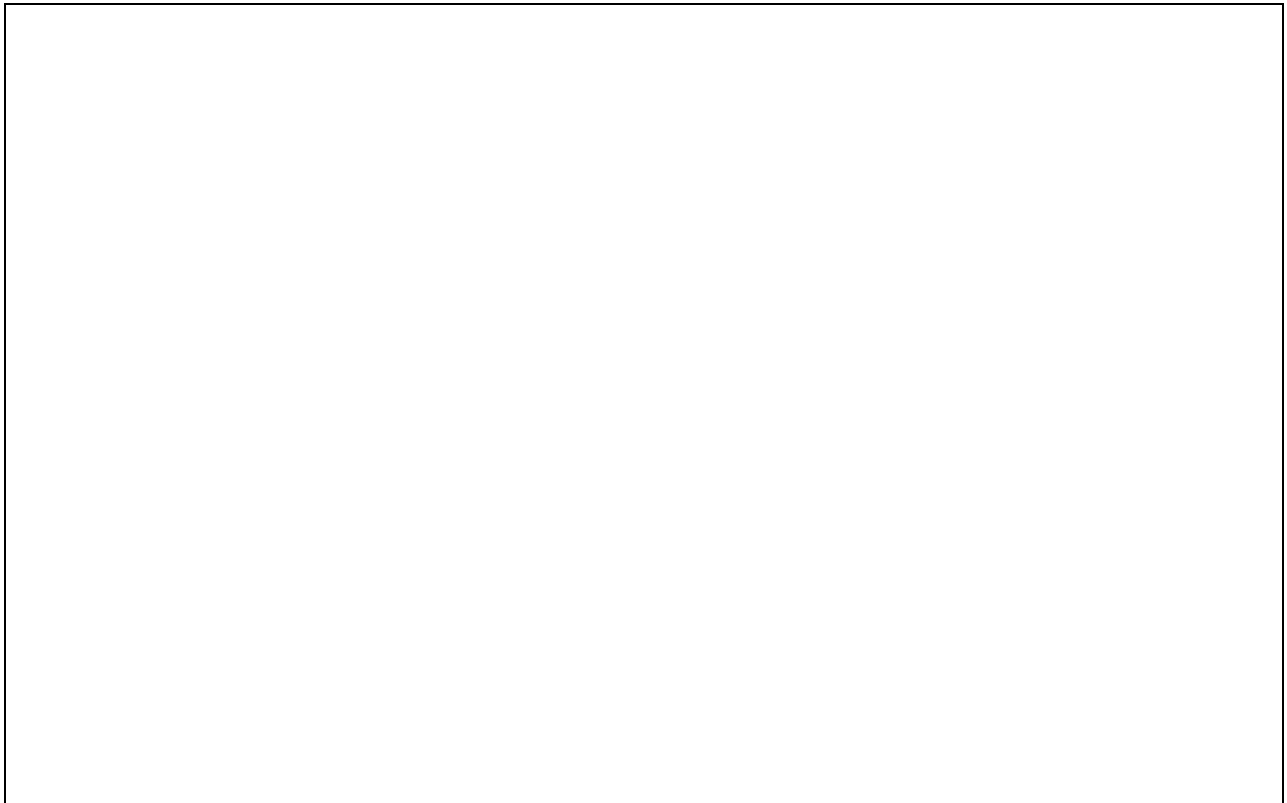
adapted from J. Harste, C. Burke, and M. Siegel

name \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

text title \_\_\_\_\_

author \_\_\_\_\_

*DRAW A PICTURE or SYMBOL THAT REPRESENTS WHAT YOU READ:*



*DESCRIBE YOUR PICTURE or SYMBOL:*

# *The Winter Room*

by Gary Paulsen

## TUNING

If books could be more, could show more, could own more, this book would have smells . . .

It would have the smells of old farms; the sweet smell of new-mown hay as it falls off the oiled sickle blade when the horses pull the mower through the field, and the sour smell of manure steaming in a winter barn. It would have the sticky-slick smell of birth when the calves come and they suck for the first time on the rich, new milk; the dusty smell of winter hay dried and stored in the loft waiting to be dropped down to the cattle; the pungent fermented smell of the chopped corn silage when it is brought into the manger on the silage fork. This book would have the smell of new potatoes sliced and frying in light pepper on a woodstove burning dry pine, the damp smell of leather mittens steaming on the back of the stovetop, and the acrid smell of the slop bucket by the door when the lid is lifted and the potato peelings are dumped in but it can't.

Books can't have smells.

If books could be more and own more and give more, this book would have sound . . .

It would have the high, keening sound of the six-foot bucksaws as the men pull them back and forth through the trees to cut pine for paper pulp; the grunting-gassy sounds of the work teams snorting and slapping as they hit the harness to jerk the stumps out of the ground. It would have the chewing sounds of cows in the barn working at their cuds on a long winter's night; the solid thunking sound of the ax coming down to split stovewood, and the piercing scream of the pigs when the knife cuts their throats and they know death is at hand but it can't.

Books can't have sound.

And finally if books could be more, give more, show more, this book would have light . . .

Oh, it would have the soft gold light gold with bits of hay dust floating in it that slips through the crack in the barn wall; the light of the Coleman lantern hissing flat-white in the kitchen; the silver-gray light of a middle winter day, the splattered, white-night light of a full moon on snow, the new light of dawn at the eastern edge of the pasture behind the cows coming in to be milked on a summer morning but it can't.

Books can't have light.

If books could have more, give more, be more, show more, they would still need readers, who bring to them sound and smell and light and all the rest that can't be in books.

The book needs you.

G.P.